

Announcement of Public Scoping Meetings

May 19-22, 2003

WHAT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for use in decision-making regarding alternatives for the **Arkansas River Navigation Study Phase II**. The study would address that part of the Corps of Engineers' Civil Works mission that includes supporting navigation by improving and maintaining river navigation channels. Improving channels means making them deeper and/or wider. Maintaining channels means keeping them at specified depths and widths by dredging and other means.

WHY: The study is being undertaken by the USACE Little Rock and Tulsa Districts under the direction of the U.S. Congress. The study will investigate possible operational and structural changes to the entire McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) that could improve the productivity of commercial navigation on the MKARNS. The MKARNS 9 foot draft navigation channel limits towboat loads compared to the Mississippi River's 12 foot draft channel, resulting in less efficient barge operations than could be achieved with a 12 foot navigation channel throughout the commercial navigation system.

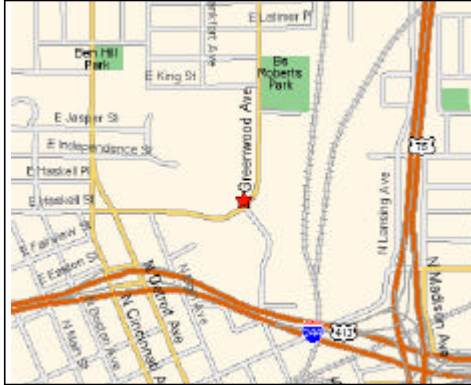
In association with addressing commercial navigation, the Corps has opportunities to promote the health and diversity of various ecosystems associated with the MKARNS. In part because the MKARNS is a multiuse waterway, the environmental enhancement element of the proposed action can provide valuable benefits to the natural and recreational resources of the MKARNS region.

The preparation of an EIS is required by Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) to document the positive and negative effects of major government actions such as the proposed changes to the MKARNS. The EIS will identify and evaluate the environmental and socioeconomic aspects of viable alternatives. Proposed alternatives for the study are being developed and have not been finalized. However, it is expected that a wide variety of potential alternatives will be considered and may include: 1) deepening the channel via dredging, 2) deepening the channel via raising the pool elevations, and 3) channel widening. Alternatives may also include changes to the navigation channel throughout portions of the MKARNS as well as along the entire MKARNS. It is also anticipated that the beneficial uses of dredge material to make habitat improvements along the MKARNS will be included in the alternatives.

PURPOSE: Affected individuals, government agencies and private organizations are invited to attend one of the public scoping meetings. The meetings will describe the proposed action and alternatives, identify issues that should be included in the EIS; identify other review, coordination or permit requirements associated with the study; and discuss the role of the EIS in the overall study process. The public is invited to comment on and identify issues that should be addressed in the EIS. Especially sought is information that would assist the USACE in analyzing the environmental consequences of the study.

MEETING FORMAT: Participants will receive handout materials that summarize the proposed action and key study issues. The meeting will be structured in an open house format. Comment sheets and a videographer will be available to document public comments. Oral comments at the Public Scoping Meeting will be limited to 5 minutes per person. Individuals desiring to make longer statements may provide written comments.

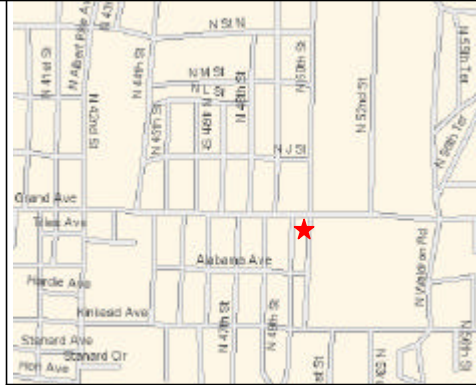
WHAT YOU CAN DO: All interested parties are urged to respond to this notice, including representatives of Federal and non-federal agencies; agricultural, commercial, industrial, business, transportation and utility interests; civic, environmental, recreational, and fish & wildlife organizations; and concerned citizens, property owners and other interests. In order to be heard and to facilitate proper consideration, you should attend the Public Scoping Meeting and present your views, or send your written comments to Little Rock District Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CESWL-PR-P (Mr. Johnny McLean), P.O. Box 867, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-0867. All comments should be received by June 30, 2003.



OSU Tulsa Conference Center

700 North Greenwood, Tulsa

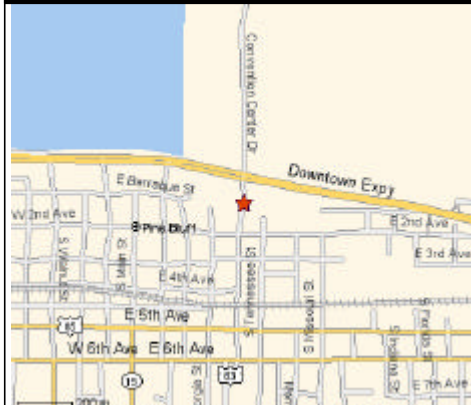
From I-244, from the east, exit on 1st Street, turn right on Greenwood. From the west, exit on Cincinnati Ave/Detroit Ave, turn left on Detroit Ave, turn right on John Hope Franklin Blvd.



Latture Conference Center

Grand Ave. & 50th St., Fort Smith

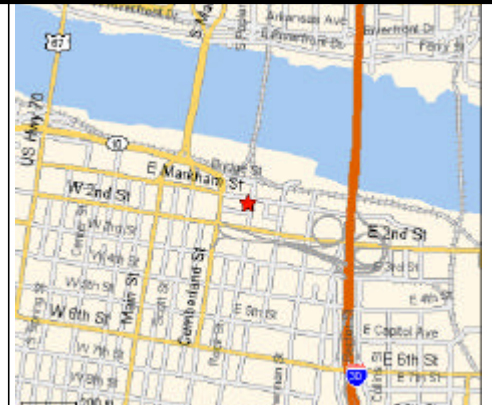
The Center can be reached from I-540, exiting on Grand Ave. and traveling west on Grand Ave.



Ramada Inn

Two Convention Center Plaza, Pine Bluff

The Ramada Inn can be reached from US 65, exiting on Convention Center Drive.



Darragh Center Auditorium

100 Rock Street, Little Rock

The Auditorium can be reached from I-30, exiting at 2nd Street, traveling west to Cumberland Street, then north to President Clinton Ave.